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SOURCE Newspaper and periodicals as indicated

PROPAGANDA IN USSR MEDICAL PERIODICALS.
JANUARY - JULY 1951

The amount of medical propaganda put out in the USSR (as distinguished from factual accounts substantiated by sound microbiological, clinical, pharmacological, and other data) varies with the type of medical periodical. Aside from occasional references to nervism and brief notes and articles designed to establish the priority of Soviet scientists in various fields of medical research, Sovetskaya Meditsina (to give a typical example) publishes very little propaganda of a semimedical, semipolitical nature. In that respect, most standard USSR medical periodicals resemble Sovetskaya Meditsina.

At the other pole is the medical newspaper Meditsinskiy Rabotnik. This newspaper gives many interesting and entirely factual reports on current medical developments and occasionally publishes very good scientific articles. However, fully 50 percent of its space is devoted to ideological controversies, attempts to introduce, not to say, enforce, new theories which have been approved by the government, attacks on prominent medical men who disagree with these theories, and rabid political propaganda with a medical background which is directed against the Western world, particularly the US.

Somewhere between are periodicals like Meditsinskaya Sestra and Fel'dsher i Akusherka, which are designed for auxiliary medical personnel rather than physicians and present a somewhat different type of information from Sovetskaya Meditsina and other standard medical journals. These periodicals contain some propaganda in articles of an educational and informative type, and occasionally publish politically slanted expositions of new theories. To give an example of political propaganda, Meditsinskaya Sestra, in outlining measures for the prophylaxis of typhus, mentions the possibility of biological warfare directed against the USSR in explaining the necessity for carrying out the measures recommended (A. I. Nikol'skiy "Prophylaxis of Typhus," Meditsinskaya Sestra, No 3, 1951, pp 16-21, [redacted] Biological warfare was mentioned in the same connection in Fel'dsher i Akusherka (F. G. Barinskiy and A. L. Nikol'skiy, "The Prevention of Typhus Outbreaks," Fel'dsher i Akusherka, No 9, 1950, p 26, [redacted] In regard to biological warfare, Meditsinskiy Rabotnik states: "The American aggressors are applying bacteriological weapons in the war against the Korean people, spreading smallpox and other epidemic diseases" (M. Sychev, "In the Service of Warmongers," Meditsinskiy Rabotnik, 17 Jun 1951).

50X1-HUM

50X1-HUM

- 1 -

CLASSIFICATION

S-E-C-R-E-T **SECRET**

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Current propaganda trends in the medical field can best be determined from a study of Meditsinskiy Rabotnik, which is notable for its stress on propaganda. A number of articles published in this newspaper from 1 January to 1 July 1951 emphasize the high level of USSR public health and medical services, as compared with those of Western Europe, the US, and other countries outside the Soviet orbit. This is allegedly confirmed by statements made by foreign medical men who have visited the USSR, one of whom emphasized the progress made quite recently, from 1932 to 1950 (D. Matveyeva, "Through the Eyes of Foreign Visitors," Meditsinskiy Rabotnik 8 Feb 1951). According to a Tass dispatch from Khar'kov dated 25 April 1951 (this dispatch was published in Pravda and other daily newspapers on 26 April 1951 and, with related material, was also presented in Meditsinskiy Rabotnik), many cases of extreme longevity have been established not only in Abkhazia (a region known for the longevity of its inhabitants) but throughout the USSR. The dispatch goes on to say that people in capitalist countries do not live so long. However, from the unfavorable comparison of health conditions in prerevolutionary Georgia with those of the present in an article by A. Khelidze, Minister of Public Health Georgian SSR, entitled "Public Health Protection in Soviet Georgia" (Meditsinskiy Rabotnik 5 Mar 1951), it would appear that the long-lived inhabitants of Abkhazia must have spent the major portion of their lives under rather poor health conditions.

Health conditions in the US and European countries outside the Iron Curtain are presented considerably less favorably by Meditsinskiy Rabotnik. The US is said to have a grave shortage of physicians due to the "militarization" of medicine, so that civilians do not receive adequate medical care. This applies to poor people only; notwithstanding the otherwise inadequate medical care, every certified gangster has several personal physicians and even the favorite dogs of wealthy people have special psychiatrists who take care of their mental health (M. Sychev, "In the Service of Warmongers," Meditsinskiy Rabotnik, 17 Jun 1951). According to A. Trubnikova ("Crime Against Childhood," Meditsinskiy Rabotnik, 21 May 1951), there is widespread starvation among children in the US, so that it is common practice among poor people to sell their children or save them from starvation. Another reason given for selling children in the US, even before they are born, is that most people cannot afford the medical expenses connected with confinement. The author tells of an unemployed Detroit father who could not pay these expenses, with the result that both the mother and child were kept by the hospital as security to enforce payment. She adds that the only way to pay the hospital bill under the the circumstances would have been for the mother to sell the child through one of the professional intermediaries who engage in this type of trade and regularly visit American hospitals looking for profitable deals. In the author's opinion, such occurrences and the appalling state of health of American children, which she describes in some detail, are due to the lack of state health care, as evidenced by the fact that only 2 percent of the US federal budget is assigned to public health needs. One of the hazards to which American children are exposed, according to Trubnikova, is that schoolboys are taken to military maneuvers where berserk army officers fire live shots at random without considering that somebody may get killed. She states that, in one instance, such maneuvers took place near Boston.

In similar vein, Prof. A. Rubakin deals with mental health in the US ("Mental Diseases in the USA," Meditsinskiy Rabotnik, 18 Mar 1951), a subject which is also discussed by Trubnikova and Sychev.

According to a Soviet observer who visited Great Britain, socialized medicine there is an unmitigated failure, mainly because British physicians are also permitted to treat private patients. The observer also thinks that sanitary conditions at British hospitals are bad, because visitors are admitted in street clothing, while only medical nurses wear smocks. He

- 2 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

SECRET

SECRET
S-E-C-R-E-T

50X1-HUM

states that he found the outlook of British physicians, most of whom have only a very hazy idea of the great inheritance left by Academician I. P. Pavlov, to be rather limited, although some of them are aware of the pre-eminence of Soviet medical science (Prof Ye. Vasyukova, "England Today," Meditzinskiy Rabotnik, 1 May 1951). M. Sychev in an article entitled "Laborist Health Protection" (Meditzinskiy Rabotnik, 1 Feb 1951) deplures what he refers to as generally bad health conditions in Great Britain claims the existing state of affairs can be partly explained by high expenditures for armaments and by a shortage of nurses caused by the fact that many of them are recruited into the armed forces.

In the same issue of Meditzinskiy Rabotnik, B. Kostritsyn, in an article on "Franco's Spain," refers to epidemics of typhus and other diseases which rage in Spain, mentions that this country has the highest infant mortality rate in Europe (10 percent) according to official government statistics, and describes the recent revival of lepra in Spain (more than 18,000 cases among children, according to Spanish government statistics).

I. Remizov ("Under American Bondage," Meditzinskiy Rabotnik, 7 Jun 1951) describes conditions in what he calls fascist Yugoslavia. He mentions the heavy expenditures for armaments in that country, the rapacious exploitation of industrial workers, and the bad health conditions (80 percent incidence of tuberculosis) and high frequency of accidents (particularly in mines) among these workers.

According to accounts published in Meditzinskiy Rabotnik, public health conditions are also bad in Turkey (M. Sychev, "Public Health Care in Turkey," Meditzinskiy Rabotnik, 15 Apr 1951) and Austria (V. Troyerukov, "Health Protection in Austria," Meditzinskiy Rabotnik, 8 Apr 1951). Troyerukov ascribes the unsatisfactory conditions in Austria to the workings of the Marshall Plan and points out that, the lack of medical care in that country notwithstanding, many Austrian physicians are unemployed.

Criticism of health conditions in Italy is tempered by emphasis on the friendly reception which Soviet visitors to a medical convention received at a large Rome hospital in Prof F. Uglov's "Notes on Italy" (Meditzinskiy Rabotnik, 1 May 1951). The author mentions bad health conditions, inadequacy of hospital service, and the venality of some Italian physicians, but states that World War II partisans, among whom there are many physicians, are still organized in Italy, and that the Italian Communist Party is strong.

By thus exaggerating unfavorable health conditions in other countries, USSR medical publicists invite by implication comparison with conditions in the USSR, thus putting their own country in a relatively more favorable light. Another comparison, made by A. Sharov in "Two Ways" (Meditzinskiy Rabotnik, 1 May 1951), stresses the humanitarianism of Soviet medical science as opposed to other countries' preparations for biological warfare, but is not drawn solely along national lines in that it distinguishes between the selfish activities of some Americans and the good intentions of others. Sharov first describes methods of "aggressive prophylaxis" for the eradication of epidemic diseases which were devised and applied by the Russian scientists D. Zabolotnyy, Ye. Pavlovskiy, and K. Skryabin. He praises the devotion to duty and self-sacrificing attitude of the scientists in question, mentioning that Zabolotnyy and Savchenko, after inoculating themselves with killed cholera vibrios, drank a living culture of cholera bacilli to test the efficacy of the vaccine. He states that as a result of work done in the USSR, the causative factors of plague, cholera, typhus, trachoma, and smallpox "either have completely disappeared from the whole territory of the USSR or are disappearing gradually." He also mentions that as a result of work done by Pavlovskiy, the virus-caused taiga encephalitis is on the way to being completely eradicated. These successes, in Sharov's opinion,

- 3 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

SECRET

SECRET

50X1-HUM

S-E-C-R-E-T

are due first to the enterprising attitude of Soviet scientists, and second to the fact that research in the USSR is carried on in a planned and organized manner. He draws a parallel between the work done by Zabolotny's pupils and the preparations for biological warfare carried out by Germany and Japan. He further states that when the Japanese began to use infected rats and to drop bombs charged with plague-infected fleas on a large scale, effective means for treating plague had already been developed in the USSR, so that Soviet physicians armed with new remedies were able to stop plague epidemics which broke out after the war in Manchuria and other countries as a result of Japanese "experiments."

Sharov goes on to discuss the devastating effect which epidemics brought in by Europeans had in Oceania and elsewhere and states that the colonists were very grateful to their invaluable ally, smallpox. He then refers to correspondence between the Governor of the State of Nova Scotia [sic], General Amherst [British General Baron Jeffrey Amherst] and Colonel [Henry] Bouquet, who during the French and Indian War planned to exterminate Indians defending their liberty by spreading smallpox among them. The plan was to supply the Indians with infected blankets. According to Sharov, Bouquet actually infected with smallpox several hundred or several thousand blankets. While General Amherst only wanted to exterminate the Indians in his own state, Sharov goes on to say, modern descendants of this American cannibal-general dream of using similar methods on a world-wide scale. As distinguished from General Amherst, Sharov says, Gen Omar Bradley has at his disposal billions of bacteria, aircraft, bacteriological bombs to drop from these aircraft and experienced Japanese specialists who are now employed in the US. The author then recalls the infestation of San Francisco in 1900 with plague-infected rats which entered from a ship. He states that when the city physician, Kellog, attempted to combat the introduction of plague into the US, he was prevented from doing so by local hotel, bar, restaurant, and bordello keepers, who feared that the California tourist trade would suffer once the danger of a plague epidemic had been recognized. As a result of the selfish activities of these persons, Sharov says, rodent-borne plague epizootics spread throughout the western US. Sharov concludes his article by saying that there is a great difference between Dr Kellog and the scientists who work at Camp Detrick and test bacteriological weapons on American Eskimos. In condemning Camp Detrick bacteriologists, Sharov refers to them as followers of Malthus.

In an article entitled "The Year Which Marks a Turning Point" (Meditsinskiy Rabotnik, 4 Jan 1951), Academician A. Speranskiy discusses new medical trends which originated in the USSR and could develop only because the October Revolution took place. He asserts that although the pro-Darwinist and anti-Virchow scientists I. M. Sechenov, I. P. Pavlov, and N. Ye. Vvedenskiy were active before the revolution, they could not overcome the prevalent German tendencies in science exemplified by the work of Weissman, Virchow, Mueller, and Ehrlich. According to Speranskiy, only under the socially receptive conditions brought about by the revolution could Russian physiological science, which is permeated with truly humanitarian ideas, receive complete acceptance, and could Pavlovian medicine, which is based on the reflex principle, pre-dominance of the central nervous system, and directed therapeutic influence exerted on the organism, undergo the rapid development which it enjoyed in recent years. Speranskiy declares that the same applies to noncellular biology. He terms 1950 a turning point because it marks the success of O. B. Lepeshinskaya's work and because a historical session of the Academy of Sciences USSR and the Academy of Medical Sciences USSR confirmed and supported the great truth of Pavlov's physiology.

Prof L. Krasnoyanskiy in the article, "Founder of the Science of Vitamins" (Meditsinskiy Rabotnik, 4 Jan 1951), which deals with the work of N. I. Lunin (born in 1854), also compares the progress of Russian science before and after the revolution. According to Krasnoyanskiy's account, the intensely patriotic

- 4 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

SECRET

SECRET

S-E-C-R-E-T

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Lunin became interested in the efforts of the famous Russian biochemist Bunge to create an indigenous Russian science of biochemistry, and began to work under his direction. Bunge had an idea that animals which perish due to the lack of certain inorganic components in their diet, are poisoned by sulfuric acid which accumulates in their organism as a result of the oxidation of sulfur contained in proteins. In his attempts to verify Bunge's hypothesis experimentally, Lunin developed the contemporary method of controlled feeding and checking food deficiency elements. The application of this method led Lunin to the discovery of experimental avitaminosis and of the existence of vitamins. This discovery, made in 1880, did not receive due recognition because of the persecution of native science carried out by the Russian government (Bunge was persecuted by the police, and both he and Lunin had to leave the country), so that F. G. Hopkins, who repeated Lunin's experiments 32 years later, got all the credit. Krasnoyanskiy concludes with the statement that only Soviet scientists were able to evaluate the future possibilities of vitamins correctly.

In the 18 March 1951 issue of Mediterranean Rabotnik, and editorial entitled "New Successes of Soviet Science" discusses Stalin prizes awarded recently for medical work. It enumerates outstanding recent achievements which were thus honored: M. A. Usiyevich's work on the effect which the functional condition of the cerebral cortex exerts on the activity of internal organs; G. P. Lang's work on the effect of nervous mechanisms in producing hypertension; Prof. G. R. Rubinshteyn's observations, over a 50-year period, on the pathology, clinical aspects, and diagnosis of lung diseases; the monographs "Comatose Conditions" by N. K. Bogolyepov, "Ermatorinosis" by P. N. Kashkin, and "Human Diseases Produced by Helminths" by V. P. Podyapol'skiy; and V. F. Kapustina; V. F. Gudov's new apparatus for saturating blood vessels; treatment of lymphogranulomatosis with Embikhin, a substance which according to descriptions in the Soviet press appears to be a nitrogen mustard; a new method for the treatment of bacillary dysentery; a new design of the tomofluorograph; introduction of a new method for the production of paraaminosalicylic acid, which is referred to as a domestic remedy for tuberculosis; V. G. Gordeyev's liquid for the treatment of tumors and ulcerous diseases of the skin; and new techniques for restorative plastic surgery of the hand. The editorial states that these achievements express a triumph of Soviet culture which is national in form and socialistic in content. It contrasts constructive, peaceful, and humanistic achievements of this type with the work of Western bourgeois scientists, who concentrate on the development of weapons for atomic, biological, and chemical warfare, and declares that the recent award of Stalin prizes refutes the lies of American-British warmongers who libel the USSR.

NOTE

The preceding section of the report deals primarily with medical propaganda of a direct and obvious type. There is another type of propaganda which is more subtle. It is connected with attempts to demonstrate that certain new or allegedly new scientific theories in medicine and related sciences have a definite ideological content. This refers to Pavlov's physiological theories and their application in medicine, as exemplified by Speranskiy's work

50X1-HUM

T. D. Lysenko's genetic theories, O. B. Lepeshin-skaya's noncellular biology [redacted] and G. Bosh'yan's microbiological theories that contain elements of both Lysenko's genetics and Lepeshin-skaya's noncellular biology [redacted]. The theories in question antedate the period under discussion (the first half of 1951). The results obtained by the investigators mentioned, the generalizations made by them on the basis of these results, and the hypotheses used by them in experimental work have been covered thoroughly in previous reports. However, all current USSR publications in the field of biology are interspersed with references to the work in question.

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- 5 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

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In view of the fact that these references are invariably tied in with nationalistic and political propaganda, consideration of the theories involved from the standpoint of propaganda is pertinent. A Speranskiy's article cited above ("The Year Which Marks a Turning Point") forms a typical example. I. P. Pavlov is commonly referred to as a revolutionary and antibourgeois scientist whose work could come to fruition only after the Soviet regime had been established, although he actually completed the major portion of his work before the revolution, received adequate recognition for this work both in prerevolutionary Russia and abroad, and was an outspoken critic of the Communist regime after the revolution. However, the determinist and authoritarian ideas which underlie Pavlov's physiology and particularly its postrevolutionary medical applications by Speranskiy and others appeal to Communist ideologists. For that reason, they have appropriated Pavlov's ideas. Lysenko, who claims that new species can be created by properly modifying the external environment of plants, is no less deterministic and authoritarian than Pavlov. While Lysenko's and Bosh'yan's theories are actually new, the same determinist principle which has been noted in Pavlov's and Lysenko's theories is implied in the greater control of the experimenter over the living cell (Lysenko's) or the microorganism (Bosh'yan) assumed by these investigators. Paradoxically, Bosh'yan's emphasis on the adaptability of the microorganism (spontaneous or in undergoing modifications induced by the experimenter) has led him to an apparent conflict with Pavlovian medicine (nervism) in that he ascribes a relatively greater effect in disease to the microbiological causative factor than to the macroorganism (cf. M. S. Gannushkin, "Factors of the External Medium in the Etiology of Infectious Diseases," Veterinariya, Vol XXVIII, No 3, 1951 pp 7-11).

Notwithstanding the talk about freedom of criticism in science, adherence to officially accepted theories like those mentioned above is insisted upon to an increasing extent in the USSR. According to Academician S. I. Vavilov, the late president of the Academy of Sciences USSR, the path indicated by a man like Pavlov must be followed without deviation, because rational planning of science is realized thereby (S. I. Vavilov, Introductory Address Held at the Combined 1950 Session of the Academy of Sciences USSR and the Academy of Medical Sciences USSR). Whenever a Soviet scientist deviates from officially accepted theories, he is accused of contempt for national science and a predilection for foreign, bourgeois science. In such cases, resolutions condemning the culprit are passed by official organizations and published in scientific journals, newspapers, popular and semi-popular periodicals, etc. Thus as far as nonadherence to Pavlov's theories is concerned, Academicians L. A. Orbeli (Yu. Zhdanov, "Some Results of the Session on Physiology," Zhurnal Vyshey Nervnoy Degatel'nosti imeni I. P. Pavlova [Journal of Higher Nervous Activity imeni I. P. Pavlov], Vol I, pp 11-17; reprinted from Pravda, 28 Jul 1950; and I. S. Beritashvili (Resolution of the Scientific Council on Problems of I. P. Pavlov's Physiological Teaching, Academy of Sciences USSR, 12 April 1951, Fiziologicheskii Zhurnal SSSR imeni I. M. Sechenova, Vol XXXVII, No 1, 1951, pp 127-128) were criticized. The resolution directed against Beritashvili was passed after the Scientific Council had heard a report presented by Beritashvili and had considered questions raised during a discussion of this report. In connection with their ideological heresies, both Orbeli and Beritashvili were accused of suppressing criticism and of using police methods in the institutions they headed.]

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- 6 -

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